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<http://punjabiuniversity.academia.edu/JogaSingh/papers>

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<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCcuqlzPpaMJogbwN3I6DLkg/videos?>

From this booklet (p.8):

‘What seems to be standing in our way is a set of myths about language and learning, and these myths must be revealed as such to open peoples’ eyes. One such myth is that the best way to learn a foreign language is to use it as a medium of instruction. (In fact, it is often more effective to learn additional languages as subjects of study.) Another is that to learn a foreign language you must start as early as possible. (Starting early might help learners to have a nice accent, but otherwise, the advantage goes to learners who have a well developed first language.) A third is that the home language gets in the way of learning a foreign language. (Building a strong foundation in the first language results in a better learning of additional languages.) Clearly, these myths are more false than true, yet they guide the way policymakers tend to think about how speakers of other languages must learn dominant or official languages’. (UNESCO, 2008, Improving the Quality of Mother Tongue-Based Literacy and Learning, pp.2)

From this booklet (p.12):

“It is often heard that our languages do not possess words for subjects like science and technology. But this view is based in a complete lack of knowledge about vocabulary.

Actually, each language has similar word power, because all words of a language are constructed from some basic elements called ‘roots’ and ‘affixes’. And, there is no marked difference among languages in terms of the number and nature of these basic elements. The following English words can illustrate this very easily:

1. “Haem. A prefix signifying blood.
2. Haemacyte. A blood cell.
3. Haemagogue. Medicine that promotes the catamenial and haemorrhoidal discharges.
4. Haemal. Pertaining to the blood.
5. Haemalopia. An effusion of the blood into the globe of the eye; bloodshot eye.
6. Haemngiectasis. Dilatation of a blood vessel.
7. Haemangioma. A malformation of a blood vessels which may occur in any part of the body.
8. Haemarthrosis. The presence of blood in a joint cavity.

9. Haematemesis. The vomiting of blood.
 10. Haematin. An iron-containing constituent of haemoglobin.
 11. Haematinic. An agent improving the blood-quality.
 12. Haematuria. The presence of haematin in the urine.
 13. Haematocele. A swelling filled with blood; haematoma.
 14. Haematocolpos. Retention of the menses due to a congenital obstruction of vagina.
 15. Haematogenesis. The development of the blood.
 16. Haematoid. Having the nature or appearance of blood.
 17. Haematology. The science dealing with the formation, composition, functions and diseases of the blood.
 18. Haematolysis. Destruction of blood cells and liberation of haemoglobin.
 19. Haematoma. The blood tumour; H. Auris, the blood tumour of the external.”
- (With thanks from Rawat, 1985)

At first sight, it would appear that our languages do not have words equivalent to these ones. But the truth is that all of the words above are derived by adding suffixes (endings) to the root (base) ‘Haem’, meaning ‘blood’. The following Hindi parallels of these words, respectively, will make it clear that either our languages have their equivalents or we can get them in no time:

1. rakt 2. rakt-koshika 3. rakt-prerak 4. raktiya 5. raktiya-netr 6. raktvahini-pasar 7. rakt-massa 8. raktjor-vikar 9. rakt-vaaman 10. lauhraktiya 11. raktvardhak 12. raktmuutr 13. rakt-granthi/suujan 14. rakt-maasdharmaardh 15. rakt-utpaadan 16. raktruup 17. rakt-vigiyan 18. rakt-hraas 19. rakt-granthi.”

International Opinion On Language Issues:

Mother Tongue is the Key to Education, Knowledge, Science, and English Learning

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Forward

Language permeates each sphere of human activity. But, this domain, which has crucial role for the material and spiritual growth of any people, is being completely ignored by the Indian policy makers. Not only this is being ignored, even the constitutional provisions regarding Indian mother tongues are being trampled upon, the provisions which demonstrate the wisdom of the freedom fighters, the architects of modern India. These provisions give every Indian the right to be educated and served through his/her mother tongue.

This criminal negligence on part of the policy makers has completely messed up various kernel aspects of Indian life, particularly, the realm of education, an area so vital to the progress of any country. It is, then, no wonder that not even a single Indian university ranks among the first 50 in Asia. The top ranking Indian educational institute IISc Bengaluru is ranked 36th in Asia. We need to remember that no successful Asian country imparts education through a foreign language to her citizens. Even in the sphere of commercial activity, the Indian international trade deficit is constantly rising, from about 40 billion US dollars in the year 2000 to about 200 billion US dollars in 2019. South Korea, a nation with a population of 50 million (less than 25th of India) ranks many notches higher than India even in terms of gross international trade.

The international research overwhelmingly demonstrates that successful education is possible only through one's mother tongue. It also shows that if other things are equal, a child imparted education through mother tongue learns even a foreign language better than the one imparted education through that foreign language, strange but very true (see section III).

The ignorance and recklessness about language policy issues pervades Indian policy makers to such an extent that lesser said the better. This document is an attempt to reveal this ignorance and recklessness by briefly presenting the results of the international research and practice on the language policy issues. I hope my fellow Indian citizens will find this attempt useful.

This booklet was written in June 2013. In this new (2020) version, a quotation from British Council publication, Canada research (see section III for both), and the sections IV and VIII are added anew. Rest of the text remains same.

This document is now available in various languages besides Punjabi, Hindi, and English, which I did. I express thanks from core of my heart for all the scholars who have translated it - Sh. Ritu Kumar Sharma for Dogri, Sh. V. Krishna for Kannada, Sh. Saket Sahu for Kosali, Sh. Shambhu Kumar Singh for Maithili, Sh. Purushotam Junne for Marathi, Sh. Virender Khadka for Nepali, Sh. Manohar Borancha for Telugu, Thiru. Gana Kuringi for Tamil, and Janaab Maqsood Sakib (Pakistan) for Shahmukhi (Urdu) transliteration. This document has been reproduced at dozens of places such as magazines and digital spaces. It is not possible to name all of them. I thank them all for disseminating it so widely.

A large number of citations from research work of numerous scholars have been used in this document. I express my heartiest thanks for all of them. Their hard labour and commitment only has provided the strong ideological support for the mother tongues. I bow to all of the scholars.

I can't forget thanking Thiru. A. Ganeshamurthi, Ex-MP from Tamilnadu, who initiated the process of translating this document into Tamil. I had sent this booklet to all Lok Sabha MPs in 2013. He was the only one who not only responded but also got it translated into Tamil.

The different language versions of this document, along with some other write-ups of mine on language issues, can be accessed from:

https://archive.org/details/@joga_virk?tab=uploads &
<http://punjabiversity.academia.edu/JogaSingh/papers>

SARBAT DAA BHALAA! (Happiness to all)!

Patiala (PUNJAB).

5th October, 2020.

I. About this document

Last month, the Government of India issued a notification which included retrograde provisions for Indian languages for central civil services examinations. The notification also added further weight to English by proposing to include marks scored in the English compulsory paper to calculate merit. This has stirred up the linguistic debate once again. This document was written in response to the situation arising out of the Indian government's issuing of the notification, a la ignorance par excellence.

The government withdrew the notification on the 15th of March due to a very stiff indictment by language experts and a strong opposition from various political circles. The discriminatory attitude of Indian elite towards Indian languages in India, however, is still worse even than their colonial siblings. The

language question is inseparably tied with education, scientific development, knowledge in general, culture, heritage, and, very importantly, with the issue of the proper method of learning a foreign language. This document is an effort to provide a synopsis of professional international opinion on these matters.

Though the Indian languages have never been granted their rightful and essentially required status even after the British left, their plight has been further worsening at a faster pace for the past 30 years or so. The English language is pushing Indian languages out even as medium of education in schools. Though the real reason for this are the Indian elite's misconceived vested interests, the following kind of false arguments are adduced in support of this irrationality:

1. That English is the language of science and knowledge and the mastery of English, therefore, is essential to make progress in these fields;
2. English is the language of international communication and business and no international exchange is possible without it.

The above kinds of arguments are a result of total ignorance about the relationship between language and science, education, knowledge in general, and about the international linguistic scene. The aim of this document is to pull the mask off this ignorance.

II. Mother tongue, other tongue, and education

It would be proper to first look at the international experience and scholarship with regard to relationship between language and education, the most important domain of present times, and with regard to the relationship between language and science and knowledge in general. The following statement from the book titled 'The Use of Vernaculars in Education' published by the United Nation's Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 1953; The book presents the essence of international research and wisdom on the issue:

"It is axiomatic that the best medium for teaching a child is his mother tongue. Psychologically, it is the system of meaningful signs that in his mind works automatically for expression and understanding. Sociologically, it is means of identification among the members of community to which he belongs. Educationally, he learns more quickly through it than through an unfamiliar linguistic medium. @ (UNESCO, 1953:11)

This opinion of UNESCO was the result of a very comprehensive research. The UNESCO had stated this again in 1968:

".....the use of mother tongue be extended to as late a stage of education as possible. @ (UNESCO, 1968:691)

The following is recorded in UN's developmental report of 2004:

“In the Philippines students' with the proficiency in the two languages of the bilingual education policy (Tagalog and English) outperformed students who did not speak Tagalog at home. @ (*UNDP Report 2004:61*)

The following statement is about the US, a country where the overwhelming majority speaks English: “In the United States, Navajo students instructed throughout their primary school years in their first language (Navajo) as well as their second language (English) outperformed their Navajo-speaking peers educated only in English.” @ (*UNDP Report 2004:61*)

I would personally and earnestly request the Indian Anglo-maniacs to take the trouble to know in what a big number the non-English medium schools exist even in mainly English speaking countries such as the USA, Canada and New Zealand. The statements presented below are from the studies carried out throughout the world on the issue :

“Thus, the results of research reported by Modiano (1968, 1973) in Mexico; by Skutnabb-Kangas (1965) in Finland; as well as those from diverse studies summarized by Gudschinsky (1975) for Latin America where a higher proportion of children who are introduced to schooling in their vernacular and later bridged into the second language, develop literacy in their mother tongue, achieve higher level of content mastery and second language proficiency and remain longer in school than children who are schooled exclusively in the second language. @ (*Tucker, 1977:3*). (Read ‘second language’ as ‘foreign language’).

The following citation is from the study carried out on the Finish children who had migrated to Sweden: "The Finish-language skills shown by the test results are fairly closely connected with the grade in mathematics. In the upper level, Finnish seems to be even more important for achievement in mathematics than Swedish -- in spite of the fact that mathematics, too, is taught in Swedish. This result supports the concept that the abstraction level of the mother tongue is important for mastering the conceptual operations connected with mathematics.... Subjects such as biology, chemistry and physics also require conceptual thinking, and in these subjects migrant children with a good mastery of their mother tongue succeeded significantly better than those who knew their mother tongue poorly. @ (*Skutnabb-Kangas and Toukomaa, 1976*). " (*quoted in Paulston, 1977:94*)

Let us have a look at another statement about the USA :

"Likewise, in the United States, there has seemed to emerge a gradual awareness that many non-English residents are not best served by being submerged in a monolingual English education system where no attention is paid to the development of their native language." @ (*Tucker, 1977:3*)

This one is from a study on Ghana:

“Bokamla and Tlou (1977:45) report that in Ghana only 5 percent of all children who leave elementary school go on to secondary school. In Zaire, only 30 percent of the children who enter elementary school

complete the first four grades. The authors attribute this to inability to master the language of instruction. @ (*Fasold, 1984:306*)

Further, “It is not true, however, that students will not learn science and mathematics if they do not know English. The ideas of science are not bound by one language and one culture. The Russians, Germans, and French boast of excellent scientific discoveries without using English. The top five performers in the 2003 Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), namely Singapore, Republic of Korea, Hong Kong, Chinese Taipei, and Japan, are countries where English is not the first language.” @ (*Ricardo and Nolasco, 2009:6*). In 2012 again, none of the top ten performing countries was the one where English was the first language. All of us know that ancient India and the Arab world held a proud place in the field of knowledge without English. In a sense, English was not even born then.

The Norway’s Global Monitoring Report (Benson, 2005) states thus:

“The Six-Year Yoruba Medium Primary Project (Fafunwa et al. 1975; Akinnaso 1993; see Adegbiya 2003 for other references) demonstrated unequivocally that a full six-year primary education in the mother tongue with the L2 taught as a subject was not only viable but gave better results than all-English schooling. It also suggested that teachers should be allowed to specialize in L2 instruction.”

“More recent work demonstrates similar findings and goes beyond these to illustrate the positive aspects of mother tongue-based bilingual programs listed above....” @ (*Benson, 2005*). (The mother tongue-based bilingual education means that the education be imparted in mother tongue and the foreign/second language be taught as a subject).

Thus, we find that it is proved time and again throughout the world that the success in education which can be achieved through mother tongue medium cannot be achieved at all through a foreign language medium. Hence, it is not incorrect to state that successful education is possible only when it is mother tongue based. The following statement brings out some of the reasons for this:

“One’s own language enables a child to express him/herself easily, as there is no fear of making mistakes. MLE (multilingual education – the education method where mother tongue is the medium of instruction and other language(s) are taught as a subject - JS) encourages active participation by children in the learning process because they understand what is being discussed and what is being asked of them. They can immediately use the L1 to construct and explain their world, articulate their thoughts and add new concepts to what they already know. MLE empowers the teachers as well, particularly when they are more fluent and adept in the local language than in the languages of wider communication. Because the students can express themselves, the teachers can more accurately assess what has been learned and identify areas where students need further assistance, MLE creates the conditions for the integration of the people’s community knowledge—the knowledge that informs their lives and give them meaning—into the school

system. MLE makes it possible for the community to produce its own culturally relevant reading materials and teaching aids, together with the local writers, illustrators, cultural groups and other stakeholders in the community. MLE also empowers the parents who can take an active part in the education of their children because the school's and the community's language are also their language. MLE brings the community closer to the school and its programs." (Ricardo and Nolasco, 2009:4)

The experts on language and on education opine that if the child's mother tongue is not the medium of education, child wastes many of his/her years in learning the language, because in this way, "...the young learners and their teachers will concentrate on the language, not on Science and Math and literacy (that is more fundamental to learning). The best way to learn basic science and math, problem solving skills, and reasoning skills is through the L1. @ (Ricardo and Nolasco, 2009:11)

We have seen above that the worldwide research and the expert opinions provide a definitive proof that success in education is possible only through the mother tongue medium. But, here in India, the people in control of language and education policies are hell bent on English and are keeping their eyes and ears shut. They are ruining India's education, language and culture beyond redemption. As we have stated behind, a humble aim of this write up is to remove the blinders off their eyes and the thick wax off their ears.

The findings of the international research being described below will further help in piercing this dastardly ignorance. These findings show that the mother tongue medium is essential for success not only in education, it is better than foreign language medium even for learning a foreign language.

III. Foreign language learning and mother tongue medium vs. Foreign language medium

It would be proper to start with a statement from the UNESCO:

"What seems to be standing in our way is a set of myths about language and learning, and these myths must be revealed as such to open people's eyes. One such myth is that the best way to learn a second (read foreign - JS) language is to use it as a medium of instruction. (In fact, it is often more effective to learn additional languages as subjects of study.) Another is that to learn a second language you must start as early as possible. (Starting early might help learners to have a nice accent, but otherwise the advantage goes to learners who have a well developed first language.) A third is that the home language gets in the way of learning a second language. (Building a strong foundation in the first language results in a better learning of additional languages.) Clearly these myths are more false than true, yet they guide the way policymakers tend to think about how speakers of other languages must learn dominant or official languages." @ (UNESCO, 2008:12).

This statement is based on studies from 12 countries spread over all continents. The study included India too and it was funded by the World Bank, not an opponent of English.

This is what the British government agency for teaching English worldwide states on the issue: “There is little or no evidence to support the widely held view that EMI (English as Medium of Instruction) is a better or surer way to attain fluency in English than via quality EaS (English as Subject).” @ (*The British Council 2017:3*). The British Council is the agency which conducts IELTS tests. What may be even more important is stated below:

“Expert estimates are that it takes pupils six to eight years to develop the cognitive and academic language proficiency (CALP) needed to support learning across the curriculum. A move to EMI in or just after lower primary, commonly found in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa, yields too shallow a foundation of English to sustain learning across the curriculum from the upper primary years onwards. Early introduction of EMI is thus viewed as impairing learning in the formative years and limiting educational attainment.” @ (*Ibid*)

Just count the, educational, economic, and psychological costs of “six to eight years”, that too in an era when information/knowledge is being renewed at a lightening speed.

A similar study is based on Finish children who migrated to Sweden. This study showed,

"Overwhelmingly, the better a student knew Finish (as a function of having attended school for several years in Finland), the better he learned Swedish. An examination of language skills of siblings found that who moved from Finland at an average age of 10 have preserved an almost normal Finnish language level, and they also approach the normal level in Swedish of Swedish pupils... The children who moved under the age of six, or who were born in Sweden, do not do as well. Their Swedish language development often stops at the age of about 12, evidently because of their poor grounding in the mother tongue." @ (*Paulston, 1977:92-3*).

A recent study in Canada showed that non-English children who used mother tongue at home had better competence in English than the ones who did not use mother tongue at home.

Thus, it is clear that foreign languages are better learned by studying through mother tongue medium. The following tells why it is so:

"Butzkamm insists that we have to re-define the role of the native language as the major resource in foreign language learning and teaching. As children grow into their mother tongue, (1) they have learnt to conceptualize their world and have fully grasped the symbolic function of language; (2) they have learnt to communicate; (3) they have learnt to speak and use their voice; (4) they have acquired an intuitive understanding of grammar and have become aware of many of the finer points of language; (5) they have acquired the secondary skills of reading and writing. The mother tongue is therefore the greatest asset people bring to the task of foreign language learning. It provides an indispensable Language Acquisition Support System and makes instruction possible in the first place. @ (*WIKIPEDIA*).

“Successful learners capitalise on the vast amount of both linguistic skills and world knowledge they have already accumulated via the mother tongue. For the most part, they need not reconceptualise their world in the new language. They have acquired an L1 along with its accompanying discourse skills and pragmatic knowledge, which are directly available for incorporation into the target language system. For instance, they need not be told that requests, wishes or warnings can masquerade as statements. Also, the path breaking power of L1 grammar is not dependent on the fact that both languages share similar grammatical features. It is because all languages have evolved means of expressing abstract ideas such as possession, number, agent, instrument, negation, cause, condition, obligation etc., no matter how they do this; one natural language is enough to open the door for the grammars of other language because all languages are cut from the same conceptual cloth. In a deep sense, we only learn language once”. @

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wolfgang_Butzkamm

The facts described so far should suffice to take the blinders off the eyes and pull the deafening wax out of the Indian policy makers. However, it won't do any harm to look into what is happening in the rest of the world language wise.

In fact, wherever English has been the medium of instruction, though it being a foreign language there, it has been phased out or is at least diminishing day in and day out. Few examples should suffice as evidence.

Uganda decided in 2007 that for the first three years the mother tongues should be used as medium of education and English should be taught as a subject. This has brought them success too. An appraisal done in 2008 itself showed that the new policy had contributed to improvement in literacy.

It needs to be particularly mentioned here that there are 52 language groups in Uganda. The change in Uganda was based on the idea that a student learnt a foreign language better if he had a good foundation in the mother tongue. Before this new policy, the school education in Uganda used to be in English medium from the very start. (*See Kavuma, 2009 for these facts*).

Malaysia decided in 2009 to teach Math and Science in Bhasha Malasia in National schools and in Chinese and Tamil in the Local schools.

There can't be a better comment on the illiteracy of Indian policy makers than that Malaysia finds it correct to teach science in Tamil medium to Tamils but it is considered almost a crime here in India. There is a proverb in Punjabi which means that 'without sense, even wells go dry'. We may not know much about that, but the English infected Indian heads have certainly gone empty. Anyhow, it won't be bad to have some more evidence here.

“New Zealand and Britain have shown more regard for their indigenous minority languages (though not for immigrant languages) in recent years, which also shows in their employment as the medium of instruction in schools. The recent history of New Zealand's policy regarding the Maori language and culture

is highlighted by S. May, with an optimistic outlook (pp. 21–41). Initial assessments of the newly institutionalised Maori elementary schools (Kura Kaupapa), with Maori medium instruction, ‘suggest that the academic progress of children (. . .) is comparable to their mainstream peers, while providing the added advantage of bilingualism’ (p. 35). In the case of Hong Kong there has been an increase in the use of Puntonghua, which has also been introduced as a widely taught school subject, while indigenous Cantonese still serves as the medium of instruction together with English. Malaysia, in contrast, has restrained the status and function of English and substituted it by Malay (Bahasa Malaysia) as the sole official language of the country and the sole medium of instruction in public schools and universities (S. Kaur Gill, pp. 135–152).” @ (Ammon, 2004)

It is clear, thus, that all English infected nations of yester years are bidding it farewell. The reason seems to be that none wants to be a friend of ignorance (except us, the Indians, highly addicted to mental slavery, and ignorance).

But why is it happening in India, then? The real reason for this is the Indian Manuvaad; The Indian elite want to plunder all and deprive other Indians of everything through the instrument of English language. Therefore, we need to demolish the ideological bases which sustain this Indian Neo-Manuvaad in the digital age. These bases are some myths, which have been nicely unmasked in a Stockholm (Sweden) University Report (see Benson, 2005). Some of these myths are described below.

IV. Some more myths surrounding language

IV.1. “The one nation—one language myth: The colonial concept that a nation-state requires a single unifying language has influenced policy-makers in many parts of the world, yet imposition of a so-called “neutral” foreign language has not necessarily resulted in unity, nor have relatively monolingual countries like Somalia, Burundi or Rwanda been guaranteed stability. In fact, government failure to accept ethnolinguistic diversity has been a major destabilizing force in countries like Bangladesh, Pakistan, Myanmar and Sri Lanka (Ouane 2003).” @ (Benson, 2009)

IV.2. “The myth that local languages cannot express modern concepts: Another colonial concept is the supposed inherent worth of European languages in contrast to others, but all human languages are equally able to express their speakers’ thoughts and can develop new terms and structures as needed. Léopold Senghor once illustrated this by translating Einstein’s Theory of Relativity into Wolof, a lingua franca of Senegal. The difference lies in which languages have historically been chosen for “intellectualization,” or development, through writing and publishing (Alexander 2003).” @ (Benson, 2009)

As is made amply clear by the statements above, each language is capable of expressing any kind of concept. But such an ignorance prevails around in this regard that we need to go in a bit of detail.

No language can be dubbed rich or poor in terms of sentence formation. A cursory reading of grammar books of any two languages should reveal this. Even a language without a grammar book is grammatically as rich as the ones with written grammars. So, sentence structure –wise, all languages are equally rich. It is the vocabulary which is root of all misconceptions about poverty or richness of any particular language.

It is often heard that our languages do not possess words for subjects like science and technology. But this view is based in a complete lack of knowledge about vocabulary.

Actually, each language has similar word power, because all words of a language are constructed from some basic elements called ‘roots’ and ‘affixes’. And, there is no marked difference among languages in terms of the number and nature of these basic elements. The following English words can illustrate this very easily:

1. “**Haem**. A prefix signifying blood.
2. **Haemacyte**. A blood cell.
3. **Haemagogue**. Medicine that promotes the catamenial and haemorrhoidal discharges.
4. **Haemal**. Pertaining to the blood.
5. **Haemalopia**. An effusion of the blood into the globe of the eye; bloodshot eye.
6. **Haemngiectasis**. Dilatation of a blood vessel.
7. **Haemangioma**. A malformation of a blood vessels which may occur in any part of the body.
8. **Haemarthrosis**. The presence of blood in a joint cavity.
9. **Haematemesis**. The vomiting of blood.
10. **Haematin**. An iron-containing constituent of haemoglobin.
11. **Haematinic**. An agent improving the blood-quality.
12. **Haematinuria**. The presence of haematin in the urine.
13. **Haematocoele**. A swelling filled with blood; haematoma.
14. **Haematocolpos**. Retention of the menses due to a congenital obstruction of vagina.
15. **Haematogenesis**. The development of the blood.
16. **Haematoid**. Having the nature or appearance of blood.
17. **Haematology**. The science dealing with the formation, composition, functions and diseases of the blood.
18. **Haematolysis**. Destruction of blood cells and liberation of haemoglobin.
19. **Haematoma**. The blood tumour; H. Auris, the blood tumour of the external.”

(With thanks from Rawat, 1985)

At first sight, it would appear that our languages do not have words equivalent to these ones. But the truth is that all of the words above are derived by adding suffixes (endings) to the root (base) ‘Haem’,

meaning 'blood'. The following Hindi parallels, respectively, of these words will make it clear that either our languages have their equivalents or we can get them in no time.

1. *rakt* 2. *rakt-koshika* 3. *rakt-prerak* 4. *raktiya* 5. *raktiya-netr* 6. *raktvahini-pasar* 7. *rakt-massa* 8. *raktjor-vikar* 9. *rakt-vaaman* 10. *lauhraktiya* 11. *raktvardhak* 12. *raktmuutr* 13. *rakt-granthi/suujan* 14. *rakt-maasdharma* 15. *rakt-utpaadan* 16. *raktruup* 17. *rakt-vigyan* 18. *rakt-hraas* 19. *rakt-granthi*

Thus, to state that our languages lack in vocabulary can only be a sound proof of one's not being in a sound state of mind.

The English words cited above bring out another significant fact about the touted richness of English language; none of these words is an English one; all of them have been borrowed directly from Latin. It is a misconception, thus, to believe that one would understand the scientific vocabulary better if one were fluent in English, because most of the scientific vocabulary in English is either Latin or of Greek origin.

Another myth responsible for the chronic English infection is the misconception that fluency in English will open the doors to the whole world. It is essential, therefore, to know what is happening in the world around linguistically.

IV.3. "The L2 as global language myth: The foreign L2 is often seen as necessary for further education, work and other opportunities, yet, as Phillipson (1992) points out, this has not happened in a political vacuum but is the result of deliberate promotion by powerful countries or groups of their respective languages. Meanwhile, employment in the informal sector of low-income countries involves 50 percent or more of the population and is increasing, and primary schooling is still terminal for most. The vast majority will not be integrated into the global marketplace and will have little use for the L2 (Bruthiaux 2002)." @ (Benson, 2005)

IV.4. The early age advantage in foreign language learning myth: There is a widespread belief that children learn a foreign/language quicker and better than adults. This quote from present Indian Government's NEP 2020 describes the Draft Committee's and the Union Cabinet's superstitious belief on the issue:

"As research clearly shows that children learn languages most quickly between the ages of 2 and 8 and that multilingualism has great cognitive benefits to young students, children will be exposed to different languages early on (but with a particular emphasis on the mother tongue), starting from the Foundational Stage onwards (cf. NEP 2020, para 4.12, pp.13, the Foundational Stage is year 3-8 of the child's age).

But the international common practice and international research both refute this belief. Internationally, exposure, on average, to second/foreign language generally starts around the 9th year of child's age. The following quote about English teaching in China provides the average international picture:

“According to the National Curriculum, English, as one of the three core subjects, starts from Primary Three; however, local education departments and individual schools have flexibility to decide when to include English lessons. Many schools in metropolitan areas introduce English earlier, from Primary One, whilst for those in remote and rural areas, the introduction of English may have to be delayed due to inadequate teaching resources.”

“Generally speaking, where English starts from Primary Three, based on the National Curriculum in the version of 2011, the weekly lessons for three core subjects in primary schools are required as follows. “From Primary Three to Six, students are offered three English lessons per week with 40 min per lesson. However, the weekly contact hours for Chinese and mathematics are greater over six years of study. Compared to the minor subjects, such as PE (physical education - JS), science and music, English has a similar number of lessons (MOE 2001, MOE=Ministry of Education - JS). English, based on hours taught, could therefore be regarded as a minor subject.”

(<https://multilingual-education.springeropen.com/articles/10.1186/s13616-016-0026-0>).

I think the whole of India thinks China has gone mad after English. No surprise to me. When one does not know and also does not feel any need for knowing anything, one can think like this only; during the great information age as well.

As for the early age advantage, the following findings of the MIT (USA) are revealing:

“Thousands of adults who started learning after 20 years old scored in a native-level range.”

((https://medium.com/@chacon/mit-scientists-prove-adults-learn-language-to-fluency-nearly-as-well-as-children-1de888d1d45f?fbclid=IwAR0cSb4zP38MLDngtkWs7kQ51Mou_qsjXM4qiDo_-KTz1WhHeeXlGcxniFM, pp. 3).

“Studies that compare children and adults exposed to comparable material in the lab or during the initial months of an immersion program show that adults perform better, not worse, than children.... perhaps because they deploy conscious strategies and transfer what they know about their first language.” (Ibid, pp. 7).

“....even after a year of studying, the 20+ year old start group is commonly scoring 80-85% on this incredibly difficult grammar test.” (Ibid, pp. 9). 90% is the native-level score.

Alex Rawlings of Britain, who speaks 15 languages, states his first hand experience thus:

“People say it’s too hard as an adult. But I would say it’s much easier after the age of eight. It takes three years for a baby to learn a language, but just months for an adult.”

(<https://qz.com/753528/science-suggests-bilingualism-helps-keep-our-brains-mentally-fit/>).

It is true that children can learn several languages at the same time in a natural set-up. But the apparently hair-thin difference between a natural language environment and a formal classroom set-up is a Himalyan one in reality. This should be clear from the fact that even a graduate Indian who studies English language from grade one cannot be considered very fluent in English, a task which can be accomplished in less than a year. See the consequences of this formal/informal difference from the link below and also look at the MIT findings above:

https://theconversation.com/whats-the-best-way-to-teach-children-a-second-language-new-research-produces-surprising-results-122059?fbclid=IwAR1dTTxunVVHmD_ECMLX7fX1i1ks6q7Y0W5gJ7nijEi3WFHLQkfnt11dkVM

V. Contemporary language trends

Two trends are distinctly visible in the present day linguistic scenario – one, the diminishing usage, prestige and dominance of English and two, the rising importance of languages other than English in all domains of language use.

We have already seen above that in all the non-English speaking countries (except the Great India and her past sibling and present geo-cum-wisdom-neighbour Pakistan) where education was imparted in the English language, it is either phased out or is in the process of being phased out. Same is happening in other domains.

Around 2000, eighty per cent of internet content was in English; it has come down to below forty. Information now is available on the internet in tens of languages.

Coming to India, as per Microsoft, 95 per cent of commerce in India is in Indian languages and only 5 per cent in English.

The world has reached a linguistic state where you will be the last person to be offered a job by a company if you knew only English and didn’t know any other language. A recent article in a prestigious English magazine, The Economist, stated that Britain are at a great disadvantage because they knew only English. A news article also reported that Britain was loosing £ 48 (forty eight) billion worth of trade annually due to not knowing other languages. The citation below provides an evidence for the linguistic direction the world is moving into:

" Not only do today’s workers need to be able to communicate both orally and in writing in languages other than English, but they must be able to do so with persons who have not shared their own social

and cultural experiences. @ (Stephanie Bell Rose, *The Goldman Sachs Foundation*; Vishakha Desai, *The Asia Society*, *www*).

"As other countries create funding and policies that promote, and even help prioritize, the study of foreign languages, experts say U.S. students are falling behind and could suffer in the global marketplace. @ (*Asia Society News*, 2nd April, 2009, *www*).

"English loosing its monopolistic position....

"No single language will occupy the monopolistic position in the 21st century which English has - almost - achieved by the end of the 20th century."

"It is thus clear that two trends will dominate the second wave of satellite broadcasting: other major world languages will increase their global reach and the larger providers will localise their services. Both trends indicate a more crowded and linguistically plural audio-visual landscape in 21st century."

"The close association between English and information technology may prove a temporary phenomena....So whereas English speakers used to enjoy the best and latest technology, this is no longer so true." @ (*David Graddol*. 2000 (1997).

In almost all of the schools in the developed world are trying to teach their students other languages along with the mother tongue, and these other languages are not merely English.

Things have gone so far that you can now find Chinese medium schools even in the USA in which 90 per cent of students come from non-Chinese language background. (Though this policy is very much wrong, yet, this speaks volumes about the rise of Chinese language in the world). The number of Chinese learners in the USA in 2007 were ten times more in comparison to 2000. (*USA Today*, 20th November, 2007)

"Panama is moving to make the teaching of Mandarin compulsory in all schools, in recognition of China's growing importance in the world economy. @ *BBC News* (*www*) 6th December, 2007)

Even in the countries which speak English mainly, more and more people whose mother tongue is not English are abandoning the use of English. During the 1990 census in the USA, 31.8 million persons recorded that they did not use English at home. The number had grown to 47 million in the 2000 census. This increase in number is far higher than the increase in population of the respective language groups. The number of such Spanish population alone had risen by 60 per cent. From 1980 to 2011, the number of persons who did not use English at home had risen by 140 per cent in the USA, though the US population had increased only by 40 per cent during these years. This means that the number of people who had abandoned English at home had doubled in absolute terms during these years. The Indian elite (the rashTar swamis, sans information in this information age) have completely abandoned national self-respect, not English, and don't miss to pay daily obeisance to English morn, noon, and night.

The following figures from Argentina are a good evidence to show how English is being pushed out of the media in the former English colonies:

49 per cent of Argentine media in 1983 was from outside the country. The figure for 1996 was 22 per cent.

Thus, there should be no doubt left that English is diminishing in all the domains where it had held a dominant position earlier.

With the advent of numerous language based technologies (internet, computer, mobile telephony, e-books etc.), the commercial prospects of native languages cannot be overstated.

We also need to weigh the educational, economic, commercial, and cultural losses that English language has caused us. A brief account of these is given in the section below.

VI. Other serious losses due to keeping all Eggs in the English basket

Due to the impelling commercial necessities, almost all countries of the world are presently engaged in learning the languages of other countries. But, we keep moon walking in the English cemetery, day and night. We are not paying any attention to need for learning of other languages. Due to this, we are suffering great economic and commercial losses. We will be left in complete isolation in the near future if we didn't learn the languages of other countries. Today, Chinese and Spanish should be more important to us than English. But we are completely blind not only to the near future but to the present as well. The English is being phased out throughout the world of all the mother tongue domains, which it had occupied earlier. But we are increasingly handing over all our education, culture and communication spaces to the English language. A cursory look at the decreasing Indian share in the world trade should be enough to know how much it has benefited us. In 1950, the Indian share in world trade was 1.78 per cent. It has now come down to 1.50 per cent. The increase in the spread of English in India during these years is pretty obvious to all ones. This constant decrease in India's share in the world trade tells that the Indian policy makers' English ride is a fine children's story of 'one eyed mare and the blind rider' (kaani ghoRi andha svaar). A few days back, the honourable minister Mr. Shashi Tharoor, of UNO fame, had stated that English was the key to India's progress. Had he read some UNO document on language, while he was at the UNO at least, he would have never said that. But why should an Indian minister read when illiteracy pays better dividends!

Less said the better about the cultural losses the English language has caused us and still continues to cause increasingly. A farmyard generation is being raised, a generation who neither have any intimate connection with their language, literature, culture, history, religion, knowledge or even science and nor they can have any deep sensibility for higher artistic creation or appreciation. The Indian elite who flirted with the Persian language were called 'malechhas' (the fallen ones) by Baba Nanak at that time. Now, when the

present Indian elite had buried even Baba Nanak's message deep, who will listen to Gandhi Mahatma. He wore 'dhoti' only. The things would have been different had he pronounced Bye-Bye to Indian culture and worn a tie-vie.

VII. Language death

In a recent article (Joga Singh, 2013), I had stated that even language like Punjabi, which has a literary history older (and perhaps richer too) than English, is the 10th largest spoken language of the world and is first official language of India's Punjab state, has entered the process which ultimately leads to the death of a language. The condition of other scheduled Indian languages is almost the same. Hindi too can be included in this list. Less said the better about the non-scheduled languages. A number of them are on verge of extinction. I request the readers to read UNESCO (2003) document 'Language Vitality and Endangerment' to make assessment of Indian languages themselves. I will not go into more details on this. The following statements will, however, provide an indication of the direction Indian languages are moving into.

"This mirrors the typical process of language death; people become ashamed of their own language and abandon it in favour of a more prestigious one. Eventually, they no longer pass on their native tongue to their children so that '[t]he minority language is then effectively deserted by its speakers, becoming appropriate for use in fewer and fewer contexts, until it is entirely supplanted by the incoming language' (McMahon, 1994:285)". @ (Eckert, T et al, 2006)

"However language loss... is also due to the absence of local languages in educational system. Schools play key role in preserving minority languages and consequently their culture. @ (Eckert, T et al, 2006). The Indian elite would close all mother tongue medium schools tomorrow, if they could. The Indian Knowledge Commission (a la Monek Singh Ahluwalia) is the most ignorant agency in this regard. To find the truth, you please read the Knowledge Commission's recommendations on English language yourself.

We must keep in mind that the nature of endangerment to languages has undergone a qualitative and lethal change in the present times. A century back, the interference of other language/languages was limited to very restricted linguistic domains and to a very small number of persons. Therefore, the languages survived and flourished even without any support from the powers that be. But now, with the spread of universal formal education and an intensive integration of economic, social, and other spheres of life on extremely wider geographical scales, a mother tongue can be killed within a very short span of time if it did not have the dominance in all formal linguistic domains, above all as medium of education in school. Each child is going to school and the language which is medium of his school education is destined to become his/her first language sooner or later. Therefore, the danger to marginalized and neglected mother tongues has taken an explosive shape. The battle for mother tongues cannot, therefore, be delayed any longer.

VIII. Science and mother tongue medium: an eye-opening experience

As they say, the taste of the pudding lies in its eating. Therefore, I would like to share with you a message from a science teacher Varun Kumar (translated from Punjabi by me): “I teach Physics and Mathematics. I have attended your lectures and have been teaching Physics to children through lecturing in Punjabi. I have seen very good results among children by this. By teaching science through mother tongue, I myself have started feeling like being a true being. Thank you very much. I teach Physics as a tutor in a government school in Ludhiana and teach Mathematics to M.Sc students at my coaching centre. The children who came to me were from government schools and because of not knowing English well, they used to consider themselves as incompetent. But I attended one of your lectures few years back at the school in Pakhoval village and since then my method of teaching have changed. I tell the children that English is not the only means to be a scientist; we can rather learn each science of the world without English. My students can tell a lot in Punjabi about any aspect of Physics and am in joy that I am producing learned scientists and learned doctors. My students won’t be the persons who are engaged in the rat race of speaking English. I teach Main Topology and Field Theory too in Punjabi and you would be glad to know that my M.Sc. students have continuously topped in the Punjab University for the years 2012, 2013 and 2014, because only those students are able to understand Topology who learn it in Punjabi. Joga ji, I have also taught Physics to Convent students. Truly, I have never seen children in such a bad shape. What are they to know about Physics, these English medium students don’t know even English better than us; I myself, though, have studied through Punjabi medium till 10th standard. I will become a true companion of you in your fight. I will devote my life to teach and make understand each science in Punjabi. Joga ji, my soul shivers when I see children going in an English medium school bus. I knew something was being wrong, but I discovered the right direction from your lecture when I listened to you in the Pakhovaal village school. Joga ji, you will surely be successful in your goal, because you are teaching people how to be real humans. By giving them their mother tongue, you are saving them from living orphaned lives. My sentiments also go to these Convent and English medium school children. Joga ji! Let us save them too!”

IX. An appeal

This booklet is being published in several languages, so that it could reach wider audiences. Therefore, I request all Indian people who love their mother languages and who are convinced that India cannot make progress as a modern nation without the foundation of mother tongues, to bring this booklet to the notice of other Indians. An essential task is to translate this document into various Indian languages. Whoever can do this for whichever language, please do this. I shall be thankful to the core of my heart. Since some persons

have already taken the responsibility for some languages, please get in touch with me before you translate it. Along with the reasons described behind, the wisdom of thousands of years preserved in our mother tongues needs to be imbibed and passed on to the coming generations. This is our utmost moral responsibility. A little late can result in civilizational losses.

I have added a relatively longer bibliographic section here so that anybody anyone interested in a further investigation on the issue could make use of it.

Web link: This booklet is available in Dogri, English, Hindi, Kannada, Kosali, Maithili, Marathi, Nepali, Punjabi (in Gurmukhi and Shahmukhi/Urdu scripts), Tamil, and Telugu languages and can be accessed (along with my other write-ups on language issues) from:

https://archive.org/details/@joga_virk?tab=uploads &

<http://punjabiversity.academia.edu/JogaSingh/papers>

Videos: My video talks in Punjabi and Hindi on the language issues can be watched from:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCcuqlzPpaMJogbwN3l6DLkq/videos?>

VICTORY TO THE MOTHER TONGUES!

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